

WASHINGTON. D.C. – House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform Ranking Member Darrell Issa (R-CA), today, asked House Speaker Nancy Pelosi to follow precedent established in the 110th Congress and urge Rep. Peter J. Visclosky to resign from the Committee on Appropriations pending the outcome of an ongoing federal investigation into his congressional and campaign activities.

“With public confidence in Congress at an all-time low it is imperative, when faced with situations such as Rep. Visclosky’s, that House leaders act responsibly and without delay to safeguard the integrity of the House,” said Rep. Issa in a letter to the speaker. “You will recall that during the last Congress, Republican Leader Boehner moved decisively to secure the resignations of several embattled colleagues, former Reps. Rick Renzi and John Doolittle, from their own committee assignments. He did so as soon as the controversies surrounding those Members escalated from unconfirmed allegations in the news media to the Justice Department using the courts to compel the production of evidence by those Members.”

The text of the letter sent to Speaker Pelosi follows below:

June 4, 2009

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi

Speaker

U.S. House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi:

I am writing to request that you honor the precedent established during the 110th Congress and urge your Democratic colleague, Representative Peter J. Visclosky, to resign immediately from the Committee on Appropriations pending the outcome of an ongoing federal investigation into his congressional and campaign activities.

As you know, the House has been officially notified that federal law enforcement officials recently served multiple subpoenas on Representative Visclosky's congressional and campaign offices. The subpoenas seek documents as well as testimony by current and former Visclosky employees in connection with the Justice Department's highly publicized probe of Rep. Visclosky's relationship with, and official actions on behalf of, the now-defunct PMA lobbying firm and its clients.

With public confidence in Congress at an all-time low it is imperative, when faced with situations such as Rep. Visclosky's, that House leaders act responsibly and without delay to safeguard the integrity of the House. You will recall that during the last Congress, Republican Leader Boehner moved decisively to secure the resignations of several embattled colleagues, former Reps. Rick Renzi and John Doolittle, from their own committee assignments. He did so as soon as the controversies surrounding those Members escalated from unconfirmed allegations in the news media to the Justice Department using the courts to compel the production of evidence by those Members.

The inherent risks posed by permitting Rep. Visclosky's continued involvement in the appropriations process are especially acute given that (1) the Energy and Water Subcommittee which he chairs allocates more than \$33 billion in taxpayer funds each year; and (2) the Justice Department's probe of Rep. Visclosky and others centers on the alleged use of appropriations bills to benefit a lobbying firm and its clients with whom Rep. Visclosky and his most senior aides have long been closely linked.

Madame Speaker, as a New York Times editorial emphasized this morning, Rep. Visclosky's reported decision to recuse himself from certain of his responsibilities as chairman of his subcommittee is entirely insufficient given the grave nature of the controversy surrounding him and the likelihood that the Justice Department's investigation will extend through much of the current Congress and perhaps into the next. Leader Boehner would never have tolerated such a "fig leaf" tactic by Reps. Renzi or Doolittle; nor should you permit Rep. Visclosky to do so.

As you know, the first paragraph of House Rule XXIII (Code of Conduct) states, "*A Member, officer or employee of the House shall conduct himself at all times in a manner that shall reflect creditably on the House.*"

" Now that federal law enforcement officials have ratcheted up their highly public probe of Rep.

Visclosky, he must resign immediately from the Committee on Appropriations. Doing so will not only enable our colleague to turn his full attention to clearing his name, but also make clear to the public that congressional leaders will no longer permit lawmakers who are the subjects of court ordered federal law enforcement actions to retain key positions of power and influence within the House.

Time is of the essence, Madame Speaker. The media is having a field day with this scandal just as the House is moving into the heart of the critically important annual appropriations season.

Sincerely,

Darrell Issa

Member of Congress